

CPYRGAT *Department of  
American Presumptions*

✓ "Dulles' (Allen, the cia half of the diumvirate) contagious zest for life and interest in people of all kinds—at all hours—impressed Helms. Yet an anecdote about Dulles that is mentioned in the training course for all new cia agents concerns an occasion when he did not have time to see someone. As a young intelligence attache in Switzerland during World War I, he passed up a tennis game with an important and unknown visitor who turned out to be the revolutionary Lenin. Thus, he perhaps lost a chance to influence the course of the Russian Revolution."—Benjamin Welles, the New York Times Magazine, April 18, 1971.

Kremlinologists are in accord that had this historic tennis match taken place, Dulles would have beaten the older Lenin by a score of 6-3 or worse, a humiliating defeat that clearly would have deflected Lenin from a career of revolutionary excess. Scholars think that the nimble-witted Dulles would have set the Russian netter straight politically between games, in all likelihood redirecting his opponent's titanic energies into a career as a Zurich banker or entrepreneur in the Swiss cuckoo-clock industry.

Our own sources within the cia indicate that Dulles' decline of the Lenin match is merely the tip of the iceberg as far as cia missed opportunities are concerned.

There was the time during the height of the Berlin Airlift when Dulles bumped into an incognito Stalin al fresco at a right bank Parisian cafe and

was challenged to a game of chess. Dulles—whose *Ruy Lopez* is known to have reclaimed at least two Cambodian counter-revolutionaries during the mid-1930's—was, unhappily, running late for a game of pool with Chiang Kai-shek at the Paris YMCA and had to defer his chessboard tussle, with unfortunate effects on Stalin's subsequent career.

Then there was the time in the early 1950's when Dulles was in England for a grouse shoot with the late Winston Churchill and, at the Henley Regatta, ran into Fidel Castro, who happened to need a cox for his highly regarded Cuban eight-man shell. Dulles' thoughtless rebuff to the Cuban eight is generally regarded as the controlling event in Castro's subsequent emergence as an anti-American demagogue.

✓ In more recent times, there was the 1970 Communist Chinese invitation to cia Director Richard Helms to bring Spiro Agnew to Shanghai for a set of ping-pong doubles with Mao Tse Tung and his wife, Ching Chiang, who is said in Western circles to possess a ferocious backhand on the left side of the table. Helms, mindful of his predecessor's missed opportunities, was game for the set-to, not to mention the chance for a long Dutch-uncle chat with his Chinese host, but Agnew had misgivings about the contest, and instead elected to spend the week on the links with President Nixon, assorted TV executives, and rival politicians. "When it comes to having an impact on world affairs, golf is my game," Agnew told the disappointed Helms.